



Grant Announcement

Health Care Financing Administration Dissertation Fellowship Grants for Fiscal Year 2001

This notice announces the availability of Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA) funds for a grants program designed to stimulate the involvement of new health service researchers in the study of health care financing and delivery issues. This grant program provides financial support to graduate students while they complete their doctoral dissertations in various social science disciplines investigating health care financing and delivery issues. Grant support is designed to aid the career development of new health services researchers and to encourage individuals to study issues impacting the Medicare and Medicaid programs.

Deadline--Grant applications pursuant to this notice must be submitted by October 13, 2000, to the Acquisition and Grants Group in order to be considered for award.

How to apply--Application forms and related instructions may be requested by telephone or by writing to the following:

HCFA GRANTS OFFICE
Health Care Financing Administration
Office of Internal Customer Support
Acquisition and Grants Group
7500 Security Boulevard
C2-21-15
Baltimore, Maryland 21244-1850
(410) 786-6639
Attn: Nettie Faulkner
Internet: NFaulkner@hcfa.gov

OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING

Carl Hackerman
Health Care Financing Administration
Office of Strategic Planning
7500 Security Boulevard
C3-24-07
Baltimore, Maryland 21244-1850
(410) 786-6644
Internet: CHackerman@hcfa.gov

Additionally, please contact Carl Hackerman if there are any questions, regarding the program or completion of the application forms.

Background and Introduction

The Office of Office of Strategic Planning (OSP) in HCFA is responsible for intramural and extramural research and demonstration projects designed to assist in the resolution of major health financing issues, particularly as they affect the Medicare and Medicaid programs and beneficiaries. We hope to advance the state of our knowledge in the financing and delivery of health care and to develop ways of applying that knowledge to improve the administration of the Medicare and Medicaid programs. We believe that this program serves long term and vital purposes: to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the U.S. health care financing and delivery system and aid in the development of new health service researchers. Applications must be post-marked by October 13, 2000, in order to be considered for award.

Purpose

HCFA/OSP announces a grants program to stimulate the involvement of new health service researchers in the study of health care financing and delivery issues. This grant will provide financial support to graduate students while they complete their doctoral dissertations in various social science disciplines investigating health care financing and delivery issues. Grant support is designed to aid the career development of new health service researchers and to encourage individuals to study issues impacting HCFA programs, including Medicare, Medicaid, the new Children's Health Insurance Program, and HCFA's responsibilities under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA).

Eligibility

A student applying for a dissertation research grant must be enrolled in an accredited doctoral degree program in social, management, or health sciences and be sponsored by the university in which he/she is enrolled. The student

Requirements

also must be conducting or intending to conduct dissertation research on issues related to the delivery or financing of health care services, particularly studies related HCFA's programs and their beneficiaries. Listed later in this document are topics that HCFA is especially interested in supporting in its dissertation grants program. All course work and academic requirements for the doctoral degree, other than the research and dissertation, must be completed by the time of the grant award. This information must be verified in a letter of certification from the dissertation committee chairperson and submitted with the grant application. Applications from minority and women researchers are encouraged. Students who receive support for dissertation research under a grant from HCFA may not at the same time receive support under a predoctoral training grant or fellowship grant awarded by any other agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Topics of Interest

Each year HCFA/OSP identifies issues and topics that we are interested in supporting. The following are HCFA's research priority areas for dissertation studies:

- @ ***Monitoring and Evaluating Health System Performance: Access, Quality, Program Efficiency and Costs.*** We are interested in supporting research to address the following: production of descriptive statistics on the health system's infrastructure and population of health care users, evaluating differences in access to care, impact of managed care on access to care, health care costs and quality of care and the effects of HCFA programs on beneficiary health status, and monitoring fraud and abuse.
- @ ***Improving Health Care Financing and Delivery Mechanisms: Current Programs and New Models.*** We are interested in supporting research to address: development of new payment, quality assurance, and delivery systems for acute, post-acute and long-term care, development of new approaches for managing high cost and high risk patients, development of new delivery models for managed and beneficiary directed care, development of new financing approaches for Medicare and Medicaid, and development of improved risk adjustment mechanisms for payments to managed care organizations and other innovative delivery and payment models. We are interested in studies that examine the implementation of the Medicare+Choice program; measures of health maintenance organization (HMO) performance; and innovative applications of capitated payment. We also are interested in research that will

provide information to help assess the impact of longer term structural reforms of the Medicare Program necessary to deal with the future dramatic increase in the number of beneficiaries.

- @ ***Meeting The Needs of Vulnerable Populations.*** We are interested in research projects that focus on the following: extending Medicaid coverage to new populations, development of systems to integrate acute and long-term care, development of delivery and financing models for populations with special needs, and on development of payment and delivery models for health care in rural areas.
- @ ***Outcomes, Quality and Performance.*** We are interested in research projects that: produce information to assist providers and beneficiaries in assessing medical treatment options; produce information to help consumers choose among health plans and providers based on their relative value and quality; provide information to improve beneficiaries' health status. We also are interested in research that develops and tests improved information resources. Finally, we are interested in projects that develop better tools for measuring health care outcomes and quality, as well as the performance of health plans and providers.

Data

HCFA maintains one of the largest data bases on health care in the world. These data include demographic information, service utilization, and payment amounts for over 38 million Medicare beneficiaries, and statistical information on State's Medicaid utilization and expenditures. If a student's dissertation research involves the use of HCFA data, these data can be furnished to the grantee without the customary fee. Students are responsible for identifying their data sources, including any proposed use of HCFA data, as well as their plans for analyzing these data.

Grant applicants should direct their questions concerning the use of HCFA data for their dissertation proposal to the Research Data Assistance Center (ResDAC). ResDAC is a consortium of faculty and research staff from the University of Minnesota, Boston University, Dartmouth College, and Morehouse School of Medicine. ResDAC faculty and research staff have extensive knowledge of many research applications using HCFA data, as well as data limitations and assumptions. ResDAC faculty and research staff also

have experience with the content of HCFA data files, HCFA data release practices and policies, HCFA Privacy Act regulations, and the timing of HCFA data releases. You can contact ResDAC at 888-973-7322, resdac@tc.umn.edu, or <http://www.resdac.umn.edu/>.

Application Procedures

Applications for dissertation research grants must be jointly submitted by the student and the degree-granting institution. While the actual grant award will only be made to the university, the joint submission requirement assures that both the student and the university acknowledge their respective responsibilities.

The application must include a letter from the university identifying members of the dissertation review committee and certifying their approval of the dissertation proposal. Additionally, the application must include certification that the student has completed all requirements for the doctoral degree other than the research and dissertation.

Funding

The budget of an application for a dissertation research grant must not exceed \$32,400 in direct and indirect costs for the entire project period. Allowable costs include the student's salary; direct project expenses such as travel, data processing, supplies, and tuition; and indirect costs incurred by the university in administering the grant including secretarial support. Fees for maintaining matriculation or other fees imposed on students preparing dissertations are allowable costs, provided the fees are required of all students of similar standing regardless of the source of funding. Monies for the purchase of computer equipment or employment of research assistants are not allowed. Students are expected to work full time on the project. Any level of effort that is less than full time must be fully justified.

Direct costs will be limited to \$30,000 and indirect costs will be limited to \$2,400 (8 percent of direct costs) in accordance with Departmental procurement policy regarding training grants. By limiting the amount of indirect costs to 8 percent, the university will fulfill Departmental cost sharing requirements.

While the student and the university will jointly apply for these grants, Federal funds will be awarded to the university. It will be the university's responsibility to disperse the necessary funds for covered expenses.

Project Period

Grants will be awarded for a 12-month period of performance. At the end of the grant period, we expect that the students will have completed their dissertations and will provide HCFA with a copy.

We expect to award 10 to 15 grants, subject to availability of funds.

Awards

The application should provide a brief (1 or 2 paragraphs) abstract summarizing the objectives of the proposal. The narrative portion of the application should be typewritten, single-sided, and should not exceed 20 double-spaced pages, exclusive of application forms required by HCFA, the graduate student's resume, and other appendices or attachments.

Review Criteria

Grant applications will be reviewed to determine their suitability in four major areas: topic significance, research design, support structure, and budgetary appropriateness. This review will be conducted by a panel of experts from the Government. Reviewers will score the applications basing their scoring decisions and approval recommendations on the following criteria (Relative weights are shown in parentheses).

Topic significance (25 points)

The project is focused on a significant topic in the financing and delivery of health care. The anticipated results of the project must have relevance to significant issues related to the Medicare and Medicaid programs, provide a basis for generalized conclusions, or have important practical applicability.

Research Design (50 points)

The research topic is clearly and precisely defined. The application reflects an adequate knowledge of other research related to the problem. Questions to be answered or hypotheses to be tested are well formulated and clearly stated.

Research methodology is fully described, including: explanation of sampling procedures, description of types, sources, and limitations of data to be gathered, and discussion of specific analyses to be undertaken. The methodology must be well-defined and scientifically valid. Data are available to address the research topic. The application identifies problems related to

the methodology and data and proposes ways to address them.

The grant application adequately describes the plans for managing the project, including a tentative schedule for the main steps of the investigation.

Support Structure (15 points)

The available facilities and organizational arrangements are appropriate to the research. Faculty advice, composition of dissertation committee, and support are suitable to the research being undertaken.

Budgetary Appropriateness (10 points)

The allocation of time and money reflects an understanding of the research tasks to be accomplished and of the problems likely to arise.

Final Award

Final award decisions will be made by the Administrator, HCFA, after consideration of the comments and recommendations of the technical review panelists. Students and the supporting university will receive written notification of the final award decision. We expect to announce the award decisions by December 29, 2000.

Schedule of Processing

An original application and five additional copies must be postmarked or hand-delivered by October 13, 2000. An application mailed through the U S. Postal Service or a commercial delivery service will be "on time" if it is received on or before the closing date, or is postmarked on or before the closing date and is received in time for submission to the technical review panel. Applications that do not meet these criteria will be deemed to be late and will not be considered in the competition.

Our authority for making these awards is based on the Social Security Act, section 1110, 42 U.S.C. 1310 (Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance, Program No 93.779, Health Financing, Research. Demonstrations and Evaluations)